



ASD Service Beacon

A regular publication for FSIS field and headquarters employees.

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Food Safety and Inspection Service

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bea-con (bə-kon) *noun*

A signaling or guiding device, such as a lighthouse, located on a coast. A source of guidance or inspiration.

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Occupational Safety and Health

by Glen Durst

Telephone: 202-720-3551

The FSIS Occupational Safety and Health Program is the newest activity assigned to the Administrative Services Division (ASD) and is certainly one of the most visible. The Administrator has identified improvement in the safety of in-plant jobs and the reduction of workers' compensation claims as a goal for fiscal year 1998 and beyond. In the FSIS reorganization of November 1996, the headquarters safety and health function in the Personnel Division was transferred to ASD. This function was merged in the Environmental Management Branch, which was renamed the Environmental, Health and Safety Branch (EHSB). In June 1997, the five Safety and Health Specialists in the Field Operations (FO) Regional Offices were transferred to the EHSB.

To manage the FSIS Occupational Safety and Health Program, given its scope and complexity, we need to ascertain how effectively it is being carried out at all levels. The last review of the program was completed in 1988. I have asked John Campbell, who was recently detailed to ASD, to perform this evaluation. John has occupied several management positions within the last few years that make

him uniquely qualified to carry out this evaluation. These positions included Chief of the Program Assessment Branch and Special Assistant to the Executive Director for FO with oversight responsibility for occupational safety and health.

The process for carrying out this comprehensive evaluation is very simple. First, obtain information from FSIS management and employee groups and other applicable sources from outside of the Agency that may have knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the program. Second, provide detailed recommendations that will improve the program. Finally, complete the evaluation within six to twelve months.

My goal is to transform the FSIS Occupational Safety and Health Program into the best in the Federal Government. I ask your support and cooperation with John and the EHSB as they attempt to contribute to this ambitious goal. We will keep you informed as we progress in this review. I am sure John would welcome any thoughts or suggestions that you may have on this evaluation. He can be reached at:

USDA, FSIS, ASD, EHSB
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Room 2944 South
Washington, DC 20250-3700
Tel: 202-720-0541

**OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND
HEALTH**

Occupational Safety and Health Videotapes

by Tom Wright

Telephone: 202-720-3845

Attachment 1 to this edition of the ASD Service Beacon is a list of videotapes available for viewing by safety committees and at work unit meetings. The tape library is maintained by the ASD Environmental, Health and Safety Branch (EHSB) in Washington, DC. The EHSB also has occupational safety and health videotapes on topics pertinent to laboratories. Safety and health videotapes are also available from the EHSB Field Safety and Health Specialists:

Harry Springfield
USDA, FSIS, ASD, EHSB
Mellon Independence Center
701 Market St., 2B-South
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Tel: 215-597-1123

Ray Kobaly
USDA, FSIS, ASD, EHSB
100 Alabama Street
1924 Building, Suite 3R90
Atlanta, GA 30303
Tel: 404-562-5961

Carol Leonard
USDA, FSIS, ASD, EHSB
11338 Aurora Ave.
Des Moines, IA 50322
Tel: 515-284-6308

Harry Thompson
USDA, FSIS, ASD, EHSB
1100 Commerce St.
Room 5F41

Dallas, TX 75242-0598
Tel: 214-767-9104

In addition, videotapes are available from Robert Owens, Field Operations Safety and Occupational Health Manager. He can be contacted on 202-690-5634.

Motor Vehicle Safety

A reminder to save your life: All passengers and drivers of commercially-leased, rented, privately-owned, or Government-owned motor vehicles used for FSIS official purposes are required to wear safety belts when the vehicle is in motion.

Winter driving conditions are approaching for many of you. Is your vehicle suitably equipped?

- Snow or all season tires
- Windshield wiper blades
- Battery and charging system
- Windshield fluid antifreeze
- Ice scraper
- Shovel
- Booster cables

Are you ready to drive safely in ice and snow?

- Keep your windows clear of ice and snow
- Go slow when you start, steer, and stop
- Keep your wheels turning
- Stay back from vehicles ahead of you
- Plan ahead Avoid sudden braking
- Know how to get started if you get stuck

Editor's Note: An article on Motor Vehicle Accidents can be found on Page 5.

Federal Occupational Health (FOH) Services Safety and Health Committee Training

by Harry Springfield
215-597-1123

Federal Occupational Health (FOH) Services of the United States Public

Health Service (USPHS) delivered Safety and Health Committee Training at the Northeastern Multi-District Safety and Health Committee meeting held in Virginia Beach, Virginia on October 1-2, 1997. The training was well received by the Multi-District Safety Committee, Labor Organization Representatives, Field Operation (FO) Safety Officials, and the Environmental Health and Safety Branch representative (EHSB) participating in the training.

Each participant was supplied with copies of the OSHA General Industry Standards, the OSHA Act of 1970, Executive Order 12196, 29 CFR 1960- Basic Program Elements for Federal Employee Occupational Safety and Health Programs and Related Matters, and all relative FSIS Safety and Occupational Health related Directives and Notices.

The training, as requested, was divided equally between lecture and workshop exercises. The workshop exercises, which elicited positive comments from all participants, involved four (4) case studies that required the participants to identify hazards, research the OSHA Standards and cite the OSHA Standard violated by the hazard. Participants also cited the FSIS Directive or Notice that was relative to the particular case study.

The following subjects were incorporated into four workshop exercises:

- The Control of Hazardous Energy (Lockout/Tagout);
- Hazardous Communication;
- Personal Protective Equipment;
- Means of Egress;
- Materials Handling and Storage;
- Occupational Noise; and
- Compressed Gases.

After an in-depth discussion, and input from all participants, the consensus of the Northeastern Multi-District Safety and Health Committee is to proceed in the direction of emphasizing a more

FSIS "user friendly" Committee training. The Committee indicated that if this project continues, FOH should conduct an extensive in-depth assessment of FSIS workplaces, and design Committee training specific to the needs of FSIS employees that would target basic Supervisory and Employee responsibilities in Occupational Safety and Health.

SUPPLIES

Supply Update

by Pete Bridgeman

Telephone: 202-720-5743

1998 Canadian Export Certificates (FSIS 9135-3) Are In!!

The 1998 version of FSIS 9135-3, Certificate for Export of Meat or Poultry (Canada) is now in stock in Landover. If you use these forms, we strongly recommend you put your orders in for these **now**; don't wait until the last minute to order these. The 1997 version of this form will not be accepted after the end of January.

New Blue Aprons Are Coming!

We've gotten a lot of feedback from the field regarding the quality (or lack thereof) of the blue apron (FSIS-46) for poultry slaughter. This is the 8 mm vinyl apron that has been provided to poultry slaughter inspectors for many years. The Regions used to send out 6 per year per inspector. The feedback we've been getting is that this apron doesn't hold up very well and that it stiffens and cracks and doesn't survive 2 months on the line like it should. A number of inspectors have recommended a better quality apron that has been tested in the field at several poultry slaughter plants. We're happy to announce that we agree with you, and a better quality apron is on order and should be available by the middle of January. The new apron is a 4 ounce urethane-over-nylon of lightweight construction that has

proven to hold up much better under the conditions.

Green Nitrile Gloves

We experienced a quality problem with our last bulk order for the green nitrile gloves (the outer protective glove that fits over the cut-resistant gloves), and the entire shipment had to be returned to the vendor. As a result, this item has been out of stock for over 2 months and is not expected to be in stock until the middle of November. Any orders that have come in for these gloves have been placed on back-order, and when the gloves come in, all back-orders will be filled. We apologize for this delay in getting these items to you in a timely manner. The cut-resistant gloves are now in stock, with the exception of the Extra-Large size, which are due in by the middle of November.

Whirl-Pack Bags

We periodically get requests for the whirl-pack, strip seal bags at Landover. We do not carry this type of bag. We only carry the 6" x 12" clear plastic bag - the unit of issue is HD (100). The FSIS Laboratory Microbiologists assure us that they supply the whirl-pack bags for any sampling that requires them. If you think you need a whirl-pack bag for a particular type of sample and haven't received one from the laboratory, please contact the lab to let them know your needs.

Editor's Note: The following 6 items are some helpful tips regarding the ordering and receiving of supplies. These are for your information and meant only to help move your orders through the system a little quicker. Please feel free to share this information with anyone who has the responsibility of placing orders for supplies and forms out of Landover.

Customer I.D. Numbers

Please be sure to put your 8-digit customer I.D. number in the upper right hand corner of your supply order (CFPDC-1) form when placing

an order. We process as many as 500 orders per day, and when this number is missing, we have to stop and look it up before we process the order, which can slow the whole system down. Help us to keep the system running smoothly.

Speed Memo's

Speed memo's are no longer accepted for ordering supplies. All supply orders should be sent in on the CFPDC-1 order form. All Key Plants (headquarter plants) should have received a packet of these forms with their Welcome Kit.

Emergency Orders

A legitimate emergency is when a specific export form is needed for product being shipped out to a country that a plant did not previously ship to and the form is needed right away. However, lack of proper planning doesn't constitute a legitimate emergency - there have been an unusually high number of emergency requests recently that fall into the latter category. You should allow a minimum of 3 weeks from the time you send a routine order out in the mail until you receive the order back from Landover. The larger the order, the more time you should allow for delivery. Deliveries west of the Mississippi do take a little longer than others. You can place routine orders as often as you need to - emergency orders should only be used for legitimate emergency situations. As the number of emergency orders increases, our ability to deliver a consistent, efficient supply system decreases accordingly. If you think you have an emergency situation, ask yourself this question: "Could this have been avoided through better planning?" We want to be able to continue assisting the real emergency needs without slowing down the routine orders. We appreciate your cooperation in working with us to continue to improve the supply delivery system.

Separate Your Orders!

Please remember to send separate orders for office-type supplies (orange section of the catalog) and forms/specialty items (green section of catalog). A lot of orders are coming in mixed, which requires a lot of extra work to process and slows the whole system down. Both types of orders can still be sent to the same address; they just need to be on separate order forms for more efficient handling.

Pink Packing Lists

You don't need to sign and send your pink packing lists back to Landover. They are for your information, only. The only form that needs to be signed and returned to Landover is the white copy of the AD-107, Accountable Receipt, when you receive accountable items or forms from Landover.

Keep Giving Us Your Feedback and Input

So far, as a whole, the system seems to be working pretty well. A lot of changes have been made to it since we first started up last December - a good percentage of those changes were made as a result of feedback and input we've received from inspectors and veterinarians in the field. We want to keep making improvements as we go, so please keep giving us your feedback, input and suggestions. We might not always adopt a suggestion you make, but we will always listen to your ideas and make the changes that we can. We have been, and will continue to be, dedicated to delivering a quality, customer-friendly supply system. If we fall short of that, we want to know about it so we can make the necessary improvements to meet your needs.

Thanks, And Good Luck, Teri!

Teri Gaudreau, who has been a key player in the first year's implementation of the Field Supply System, will be moving on to bigger

and better things next month. Teri came to us from Compliance last December, just as we were starting up the Landover Field Supply System, and for many of you, has been the person who helped trouble-shoot the status of your order, handled your emergency need, or set up your customer account. She'll now be returning to the Compliance Program (District Enforcement Operations) as a Compliance Officer. Congratulations, Teri...we'll miss your hard work and dedication to excellence!

Potpourri

We haven't added any new items to the inventory since last month's edition of the *ASD Service Beacon*, so we won't be including the list of additional items in the back of this month's issue.

We are working on a revised supply catalog, incorporating all corrections and additional items added to the inventory since the original "Welcome" catalog was printed a year ago. This will take several months to complete, but we will distribute this to all ordering points once it's completed and printed. We'll also look into having it posted on an e-mail bulletin board for the convenience of those who have FAIM computers.

Production work on the Supply System Training Video has been pushed back again due to additional HACCP Training production work that needs to occur in November. This could push our production schedule back to January. We will keep you posted on developments.

Editor's Note: Several laboratory employees and inspectors have observed that the gel packs in the sample shipping containers have

recently become thinner and are more prone to leak. Insulated Shipping Containers, Inc. (ISC), under contract with FSIS, provides these containers and related supplies. Tom Pringle, CEO of ISC, has contributed the following in-depth response to these observations.

Sample Shipping Containers Gel Packs

*by Tom Pringle, CEO
Insulated Shipping Containers, Inc.
Telephone: 800-654-2699*

As a manufacturer of insulated packaging and provider of engineering applications for temperature controlled packaging, ISC has recommended and distributed ice packs to a wide range of industries for over 10 years.

The gel packs used in FSIS Sample Shipping Containers are made with a water-absorbing polymer that has the consistency of tapioca pudding. When frozen, the ice packs act to absorb the heat that passes through the wall of an insulated container. Since they are primarily water, they absorb heat at a rate of 144 BTU's per pound per hour. When frozen, the ice packs are either placed directly on a frozen sample to keep it frozen, or for refrigerated samples, the packs are separated from the sample by a barrier of corrugation or bubble wrap where they act to maintain refrigerated temperatures for a specific amount of time.

As part of their quest to reduce costs and remain competitive, manufacturers have modified the materials used to make the gel pack bags and the water-absorbing polymers. For example, the bag materials have been reduced in thickness and durability to lower manufacturing costs. The result is a

thinner gel pack bag that can more easily be damaged if mishandled. In addition, when frozen, the gel packs have very sharp corners that can lead to tearing of even the toughest bags. A little extra care in handling in the freezing and packing process will result in less leaking and many more reuses.

FORMS AND REPORTS

Misprinted or Damaged Forms

*by Daniel Brooking
Telephone: 202-690-1124*

We have recently received complaints about forms that were misprinted or damaged due to contractor error. Unfortunately, the misprinted or damaged forms were not discovered until two or more years after they were printed. We can and will hold the contractor responsible and demand adjustments if we can identify the problem in time. Please check forms shipments as soon as they are received. If they are misprinted or damaged, send samples with a short note to:

USDA, FSIS
Forms and Reports Section
1400 Independence Ave, SW
Room 3816 South
Washington, DC 20250-3700

To comment on this newsletter or to submit an article for publication, please HPDesk, write or fax:

**Kevin Dressman
Editor, *ASD Service Beacon*
USDA, FSIS, ASD
Room 2944 South
Washington, DC 20250-3700
Fax: 202-720-7124**

Occupational Safety and Health Videotapes

Send your request for any of the following videotapes to:

USDA, FSIS, ASD
Environmental, Health, and Safety Branch
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Room 2944 South Building
Washington, DC 20250-3700
Telephone: 202-720-3845

Accident Investigation in the Workplace (22:00)
AIDS in Rural Communities—Education for Prevention--USDA, CSREES Satellite Broadcast
Ammonia—A Tool to Respect (13:30)
Asbestos Management and Control (11:04)
Back Care and Safety (15:00)
Back Injury Prevention (13:30)
Blood Borne Pathogens (20:00)
Carpal Tunnel Syndrome—The “Key Method” (For viewing by supervisors)
Computer Ergonomics (31:00)
Crimes of Opportunity (30:00)
Do it Right—Medical Ergonomics for the Poultry Industry (9:00)
Driving Safety (16:00)
Epidemic of Fear—AIDS in the Workplace (23:19)
Ergonomics and Your Health
Fire In the Workplace (20:00)
Fire Safety—Getting Out Alive (15:00)
Hearing Conservation (12:00)
Hearing Conversation and Safety (14:00)
Heat Stress (12:00)
HIV/AIDS in the Federal Workplace—USDA Satellite Broadcast
HIV/AIDS—Shared Rights/Shared Responsibilities, USDA Part I (60:00)
HIV/AIDS—Shared Rights/Shared Responsibilities, USDA Part II (37:00)
Laboratory Safety (12:00)
Lockout/Tagout (10:00)
Lockout/Tagout (15:00)
Reduce Your Risk of Being a Victim While Driving, Parking, or Walking To and From your Vehicle (15:00)
Room To Live—Seat Belts (30:00)
Safety Awareness (15:40)
Safety Committees—The Real Story (12:00)
Safety in the Office--AIMS (13:00)
Safety in the Office--NUS (13:49)
Safety Responsibility (15:00)
Safety Sense—Hearing Conservation and Safety (15:00)
Sound of Sound—Hearing Conservation (14:00)
Taking Control of Workplace Violence (17:50)
Think Back (9:00)
Tornado Survival Guidelines (15:00)
Video Display Terminals
Who's Responsible for Safety In Federal Buildings? GSA (21:06)
Winning Combination—Safety Belts and Air Bags (8:43)